EIF – back to classical music

Although it is not possible to bring large orchestras from overseas this year is regarded as an opportunity for Scottish and UK orchestras to take centre stage at the Edinburgh International Festival.

Some of the performances will be led by celebrated conductors who may have travelled from overseas, or feature performances by international soloists.

But one thing is certain – there is a wealth of classical music on offer.

Dalia Stasevska PHOTO Jarmo Katila

The UK's finest orchestras and musicians will feature in 26 concerts in the beautiful setting of Edinburgh Academy Junior School and 36 intimate recitals at The Old College Quad.

The BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Dalia Stasevska opens the 2021 orchestral series with the world premiere of Anna Clyne's *PIVOT*, a new work inspired by an old Edinburgh folk music venue.

The Royal Scottish National Orchestra performs Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* under the baton of Thomas Søndergård with narration from Dame Harriet Walter. Additional concerts by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra are conducted by Valery Gergiev and Elim Chan.

Chineke! PHOTO Ntando Brown

The Chineke! Orchestra, conducted by William Eddins, performs the world premiere of a new piece from Ayanna Witter-Johnson alongside Judith Weir's song cycle *woman.life.song* with Andrea Baker.

The Scottish Chamber Orchestra under Kazushi Ono presents Ravel, Prokofiev and two evocative Japanese pieces inspired by the beauty of the natural world. Joyce DiDonato is accompanied by period instrument ensemble Il Pomo D'oro for a personal selection of her most cherished opera arias.

Other major UK orchestras include the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Vasily Petrenko and featuring Isata Kanneh-Mason, the London Symphony Orchestra with Sir Simon Rattle and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra conducted by Marin Alsop.

Nicola Benedetti is in residence at the Festival combining her wide musical range with her passion for music education in three unique concerts. She charts the history of her

instrument in her solo performance *The Story of the Violin* and is joined by the Benedetti Baroque Orchestra to perform the multifaceted musical creations of Vivaldi. In Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* she performs alongside a specially selected ensemble of musicians and actors to bring this unique mix of theatre and music to life.

Thomas Quasthoff features in three performances across the Festival, appearing in *Ariadne auf Naxos* as the Major Domo, leading three of Germany's leading jazz performers for an intimate evening of vocal classics and hosting two public masterclasses with outstanding young singers to demonstrate everything that goes into an exceptional performance.

In *Lonely House*, Barrie Kosky, Artistic Director of Berlin's Komische Oper, and singer Katharine Mehrling perform an evening of cabaret with little known songs by one of Germany's most distinctive musical figures, Kurt Weill.

The Edinburgh Festival Chorus returns as a small chamber choir under Chorus Director Aidan Oliver in a concert of varied music by Tallis, Britten, Holst, Errollyn Wallen and Abbie Betinis.

The Old College Quad series includes intimate recitals from Elisabeth Leonskaja, Mariam Batsashvili, Ronald Brautigam, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Gerald Finley, Renée Fleming and 20-year-old violinist Noa Wildschut. Ensemble performances include the Zehetmair Quartet, Goldmund Quartet, Gringolts Quartet and the Chineke! Chamber Ensemble.

Edinburgh-born pianist Malcolm Martineau celebrates the 250th anniversary of Sir Walter Scott's birth with soprano Elizabeth Watts and an ensemble of chamber musicians.

The Scottish Chamber Orchestra's principal conductor and accomplished pianist Maxim Emelyanychev is joined by five of the orchestra's celebrated principals to perform Mozart and

Thuille.

See www.eif.co.uk/classicalmusic for information on individual performances.

Elim Chan RSNO Principal Guest Conductor PHOTO Sally Jubb

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